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Chairman: Mr. Erdös ..... (Hungary)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Statement by the Chairman

The Chairman: I wish at the outset to extend a warm welcome to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, His Excellency Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, who has joined us here today.

I wish also, on behalf of the Committee, and on my own account, to extend a cordial welcome to the group of Disarmament Fellows who are with us today. Over the past 22 years, the Disarmament Fellowship Programme has trained several hundred young diplomats, who have made a significant contribution to global efforts in the cause of disarmament and international peace and security. Some of them have become important representatives of their respective countries, including some who are present amongst us at this session of the First Committee.

Agenda items 64 to 84 (*continued*)

General debate on all disarmament and international security items

The Chairman: I want to thank delegations for allowing the Chair to regroup the statements that are to be made, to enable us to make better use of our time on Thursday and Friday and so that we can better prepare for the second phase of the Committee's work.

Mr. Sood (India): My delegation congratulates you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. We are confident that the diplomatic skill, the experience and the very visible sense of discipline that you bring to your task will help you fulfil the responsibility entrusted on you, while also facilitating the work of all delegations present here. My delegation would like to assure you of its full cooperation in your efforts.

I would like also to take note of the presence here this afternoon of the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Dhanapala, and of the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General for the Conference on Disarmament and Director-General of the United Nations Office in Geneva, Mr. Petrovsky, which testifies to the importance that the United Nations system attaches to the work of the First Committee.

As we assemble again in New York for a session of the First Committee, we are acutely aware that we are only a short distance away from the site of the devastating terrorist attack of 11 September, an attack that cost thousands of innocent lives and reinforced the need for the international community to take concerted action to ensure the security of all people. The diversity of the nationalities of the victims of that event is symbolic, in a tragic sense, of the global nature of the scourge of terrorism and, I would suggest, defines the kind of collective response it deserves. We share in the grief of those bereaved. We know what it means. Tens of thousands of Indians have become victims of terrorist acts in the past two decades. This carnage has been aided, abetted and promoted across borders as

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part of the phenomenon now described as terrorism with a global reach, a phenomenon that is widely accepted as the primary threat to plural societies. While continuing our own battle against that threat, we remain ready to join collective efforts to deal with groups and regimes which engage in, or aid and abet, such crimes against humanity.

Recent developments underline the need for us not to procrastinate on a number of issues that threaten international peace and security. We should seize this moment to redouble our resolve to address squarely the issues before the Committee and to take certain measures that we have not been able to take in the past. Consider the threat posed by nuclear weapons, which remains central to the work of this Committee. The security that all of us are entitled to can be achieved only through the total elimination of all nuclear weapons. The spectre of nuclear terrorism by nations or groups cannot be erased so long as such weapons are not eradicated completely from our arsenals. Hence the need to give heed to the 1996 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice, which concluded unanimously that

> "There exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control". (*A/51/218, annex, para. 105 (F)*)

As a nuclear-weapon State, India remains committed to the goal of global nuclear disarmament. It is in this context that my delegation will bring before this Committee once again, as it has done since 1992 after the second special session of the General Assembly on disarmament, a resolution calling for a convention to be negotiated on prohibiting the use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances.

India's exercise of its nuclear option by conducting a limited series of tests in 1998 and subsequent weaponization was a decision that we were forced to take due to the nuclearization of our region and the failure of existing non-proliferation regimes to deal with this threat. It was a decision characterized by moderation and voluntary restraint. The concepts of "minimum nuclear deterrent" and "no-first-use" define our deployment posture, along with a civilian command and control structure. We realize the urgent need, pending a total ban on nuclear weapons, for all nuclear weapon States to take steps to reassure the world that they will reduce the risk of accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons. There can be no justification, in this post-post-cold war period for thousands of nuclear weapons to be maintained in a state of hair-trigger alert with possible disastrous consequences. A number of specific proposals and measures have been put forward by nations and non-governmental organizations in this regard that are worth considering. The call in the United Nations Millennium Declaration to seek and to eliminate the dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction, including by convening an international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers, needs a positive response. Given the audacity and the scale of terrorist operations that we have witnessed in recent times, the urgency for action in this regard is even greater today than ever before. An Indian draft resolution entitled "Reducing nuclear danger" will be brought before this Committee for the fourth consecutive year in the hope that it will receive wider support and speedy follow-up action.

India's declaration of a voluntary moratorium on further underground nuclear test explosions meets the basic obligation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We are also committed to building a consensus nationally for creating a possible environment to subscribe to this Treaty. Developments in other countries have demonstrated that it is not a simple issue and that consensus-building in democracies often needs considerable patience and time. Meanwhile, we have made it clear that India will also not stand in the way of the entry-into-force of the CTBT. We would expect that other countries will adhere to the Treaty without extraneous conditions.

India is committed to participating constructively, and in good faith, in the fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) negotiations, in order to develop a treaty to prohibit the future production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear devices, a treaty that is non-discriminatory and verifiable. This commitment had prompted India to support the compromise Amorim proposal in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, which, in our view, would have paved the way for the commencement of the long-awaited negotiations, while also establishing ad hoc committees on nuclear disarmament and prevention of an arms race in outer space. It is time that the necessary political will is displayed by those countries whose ambiguous

positions have led the Conference on Disarmament to its current comatose state, so that the Conference can be activated to fulfil its intended role as the single multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament. Five years have passed without any negotiations, and prolonged discussions limited to procedural issues that are bound to remain inconclusive will weaken genuine multilateralism, which was so painstakingly developed over a period of time.

Since this Committee will process several resolutions dealing with nuclear weapon-free zones, let me reiterate that India respects the sovereign choice exercised by non-nuclear weapon States in establishing such zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned, as recognized in the guidelines formulated by the United Nations Disarmament Commission in 1999. India is prepared to extend all necessary commitments to such nuclear weapon-free zones. We do so while recognizing that regional approaches underlying nuclear weapon-free zones cannot do justice to the concerns emanating from the global nature of the threat posed by nuclear weapons.

It is evident that existing legal instruments are inadequate to deter imminent attempts at further militarization and weaponization of outer space. Hence the need for the Conference on Disarmament to engage itself on this subject at the earliest. India was one of the sponsors of resolution 55/32, which reiterated that the Conference on Disarmament has the primary role in the negotiation of a multilateral agreement or agreements, as appropriate, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space in all its aspects. Our endeavours should aim to preserve space for the full range of cooperative, peaceful and developmental activities. Meanwhile, arms limitation and disarmament treaties need to be implemented fully and in good faith in order to contribute to stability.

A year ago this Committee recognized the need for a comprehensive approach towards missiles, in a balanced and non-discriminatory manner, as a contribution to international peace and security. India is participating in the panel of governmental experts established on the basis of General Assembly resolution 55/33A, tasked to prepare a report for the consideration of the Assembly at its fifty-seventh session. There is widespread recognition that club-based, discriminatory export control measures have failed to address the issue of missiles. India wishes to see the norms against the proliferation of missiles strengthened through transparent, multilateral agreements on the basis of equal and undiminished security, that also ensure that civilian space-related applications are not adversely affected.

The issue of export controls is one that goes beyond missiles to a whole range of dual-use technologies. What is needed today is an effective and transparent system of technology export controls that would be in line with the objectives of non-proliferation in all its aspects without affecting peaceful applications of these technologies. The persistence of discriminatory mechanisms, some of which may even run contrary to existing treaty provisions, deprive developing countries of the benefits of scientific and technological developments. There is an urgent need to address this critical issue, which can affect the quality of life of people all over the world, in a fair and transparent manner. It is for this purpose that India has since 1989 brought before this Committee, along with our co-sponsors, a resolution entitled "Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament".

In seeking to apply the principle of non-discrimination to disarmament instruments, we have the successful example of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). It is now the responsibility of all States parties to the CWC to ensure that all of the provisions of that Convention are fully and effectively implemented. As an original State party, India remains fully committed to this task.

India — which, like many other countries, had participated actively for about six years in the negotiations for a protocol to strengthen the implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), was disappointed that the Ad Hoc Group was unable to conclude its work in time for the Fifth Review Conference planned for the end of this year. It is particularly sad that an endeavour that had come so close to a successful outcome was abandoned so abruptly, particularly when threats of bio-terrorism are becoming more likely. It is our sincere hope that the forthcoming Review Conference will succeed in maintaining the mandate for strengthening the implementation of the BWC within the framework of the Convention.

There is yet another Review Conference in the disarmament calendar this year — one which offers a

little more hope. The Second Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) not only promises to review existing provisions on excessively injurious weapons, but also presents the possibility of expanding the scope of the Convention to cover non-international armed conflicts. India has been active in the CCW process, having ratified all of its Protocols, including the Amended Protocol II on landmines.

India believes that a phased approach for a non-discriminatory, universal and global ban on anti-personnel mines that addresses the legitimate defence requirements of States will help ameliorate the critical humanitarian crises that have resulted from the irresponsible transfer and indiscriminate use of landmines. The process of the complete elimination of anti-personnel landmines will be facilitated by addressing the legitimate defence role of anti-personnel mines for operational requirements under the defence doctrines of the countries concerned, through the availability of appropriate militarily effective, non-lethal and cost-effective alternative technologies.

India participated actively in the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York earlier this year. The outcome of the Conference fell far short of our expectations of dealing with the priority of breaking the nexus between small arms proliferation, international terrorism, drug smuggling, organized crime, money laundering, and the "grey markets" that feed this link. Nevertheless, the modest Programme of Action adopted by the Conference needs to be implemented expeditiously and fully as an urgent first step in the multilateral process.

This year has brought us new hopes and fears, like an interplay of light and shadows. Some of those shadows appear longer and darker, while some of the sources of light seem to recede into the distance. Prospects for a new security framework for a post-cold-war world remain distant, even as new threats highlight the need for multilateralism. A new century and a new millennium that we had hoped would begin on a note of peace, in contrast to the past century, has already been scarred by violence.

To make progress in this Committee, we need to acknowledge certain fundamentals. Peace and security are indivisible. Every nation has a claim to equal and legitimate security. Unilateralism or exclusive alliances by a select few will prove to be counter-productive. We need to work together, using non-discriminatory and transparent approaches in a truly multilateral and inclusive manner, in order to seek the peace and security that we all deserve. This is necessary if we are to emerge from the shadows of vulnerability and fear into the light of confidence and hope.

In conclusion, let me also take this opportunity, through you, Mr. Chairman, to convey our congratulations to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and to the United Nations, for the richly deserved Nobel Peace Prize. We are sure that this will encourage both the Secretary-General and this Organization to redouble their efforts to achieve the goal of complete elimination of nuclear weapons, a goal that is so deeply cherished yet has been so elusive. Indeed, there could be no better gift to succeeding generations, and, dare I say, it is one that would guarantee the next Nobel Peace Prize also for this Organization.

Mr. Al-Shamsi (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset, Sir, to congratulate you most sincerely on behalf of the delegation of the United Arab Emirates on your election to the chairmanship of this important Committee. We are confident that your extensive diplomatic experience will contribute to the success of our deliberations and will serve to forge a greater consensus on disarmament and on the strengthening of international security. We wish you and the members of your Bureau every success.

Let me also take this opportunity to thank your predecessor, the Chairman of the previous session, as well as the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs and his Department, for the efforts they have exerted, and continue to exert, to develop mechanisms for international cooperation in the field of disarmament and of the maintenance of international peace and security.

I should like also to take this opportunity to convey our sincere congratulations to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and to the staff of the United Nations for having recently been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 2001. This attests to the international community's genuine respect and admiration for the great achievements they have recorded towards safeguarding international security and promoting the

culture of peace, coexistence and tolerance among nations.

We deeply regret that the level of international cooperation in the field of disarmament is quite low and disappointing, whereas military budgets and expenditures continue to increase at an alarming rate. Furthermore, nuclear-weapons tests and tests of other prohibited weapons continue, both overtly and covertly, in many States, despite the continued efforts of the United Nations, over a period of many years, to address the reasons for military confrontations and deadly wars.

There has also been a notable increase in arms smuggling, in the illegal and irresponsible possession of certain dangerous weapons, and in the number of wars and conflicts. New and more dangerous phenomena have emerged that affect the security of States and their citizens, such as international terrorism, drug trafficking, transnational organized crime, the illegal exploitation of natural resources and other factors that threaten the regional and international security balance of our contemporary world.

The recent report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly estimates that annual global military expenditures exceed $800 billion, or 80 per cent of average cold-war global military expenditures. At the same time, we have witnessed a notable decrease in the level of official and unofficial financial assistance to developing countries. These statistics not only reflected the pessimism and dangers that shroud our world, but also clearly embodied the oscillation in strategic relations among States, the intensification of hot spots and heightened fear and insecurity among peoples — to the detriment of various development plans and international efforts designed to curb poverty, epidemics, human rights violations, the deterioration of the environment and other scourges.

Our objective observation of these approaches and situations — which can under no circumstances be dealt with separately from an understanding of the common framework of their causes and motives — prompts us to call upon the international community to set a binding international strategy for security cooperation among all States, whose components are based on the principles of international law, the Charter, resolutions, agreements, conventions and protocols of the United Nations that do not discriminate between States and peoples. Such a strategy should at the same time guarantee transparency in respecting the sovereignty of States and their national and regional security, non-interference in their internal affairs, the legitimate right to self-defence, the defeat of aggression and the end of the occupation of their lands.

The international community continues to witness an accelerated race to develop strategic nuclear reactors for military purposes and increase the range and power of ballistic missiles and rockets with nuclear, chemical and biological warheads — despite the pledges of the heads of State and Government at the Millennium Summit last year for, among other things, the gradual multilateral reduction of arsenals of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. Not only has this escalation in strategic armaments contributed to the failure of the current negotiations and efforts — whether bilateral, regional or within the framework of the disarmament conventions aimed at achieving the cherished international goals of nuclear non-proliferation and international disarmament — but it also encourages many non-nuclear-weapon States, especially in regions in which there are tensions and conflicts, such as South Asia, the Arabian Gulf and other areas, to carry out nuclear tests and engage in a race to possess, transfer, produce and stockpile nuclear and fissile material, because of their subjective concepts of security deterrence. This matter is of great concern to us, and we strongly reject it because it is a serious and fundamental factor that reflects the escalation of tensions, the absence of confidence-building measures and the increase in conflicts among States. Accordingly, we call upon these States to reconsider and alter their positions in this regard, to exercise self-restraint and to take peaceful, negotiated measures to resolve their regional conflicts. We call again upon the nuclear-weapon States to shoulder their full responsibilities in implementing their obligations as stipulated in the series of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation treaties and protocols that call for multilateral, gradual and systematic reductions in their strategic military arsenals. We also stress the need to establish specialized mechanisms, emerging from the disarmament conventions, to follow up the efforts made to gradually eliminate nuclear weapons within a set time frame, as set out in article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and also to conclude an unconditional international instrument that provides security assurances for non-nuclear countries.

While many regional and subregional efforts in recent decades succeeded in establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones — thanks to the cooperation of States that understand the inevitability of peaceful and secure coexistence, and thus serve the common interests of their peoples — we find that the Middle East is still unable to realize this hope. This is because the Israeli Government continues to possess nuclear military reactors outside the framework of the international safeguards system so as to guarantee its military superiority and the continuation of its occupation and illegal utilization of Palestinian and Arab lands, in disregard of the principles of international law and legitimate international resolutions that prohibit all these hostile acts and policies that threaten regional and international peace and security.

The United Arab Emirates, which joined the NPT, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), in order to reinforce its international position, believes that establishing zones free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction is the key to establishing balances in international and regional strategic relations. We again call upon the international community, and the super-Powers in particular, to put pressure on the Israeli Government to unconditionally join the NPT, as it is the only State in the area that has not yet done so, and to call for it to abandon the possession of such dangerous installations and work towards complete submission to the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), in accordance with the relevant legitimate international resolutions and other resolutions issued by the sixth NPT Review Conference, in 2000. In this framework, we also call for the discontinuation of all financial, technological and scientific aid used in developing Israel's dangerous nuclear installations, which threaten not only the peace efforts and attempts to find a solution to the Palestine question and the Middle East problem, but also the security, stability and real interests of the peoples in the area and their natural, economic and environmental resources.

My country, which supports the international efforts to establish peace in the hot spots of the world and provides all kinds of relief, aid and reconstruction assistance to national establishments destroyed by wars — for example, in the occupied Palestinian territories, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Kosovo and Somalia — calls upon the international community to enhance dialogue and the mechanisms for conflict resolution and confidence-building, and to establish preventive diplomacy, combat the illegal trafficking of small arms and strengthen efforts to resolve the problems of anti-personnel mines and other obstacles to peace. But at the same time we reiterate that establishing international and regional peace, security and stability is the joint and complete responsibility of the nuclear States. Therefore, we urge those States to start serious multilateral negotiations in order to enhance their political will to finally and completely eliminate their nuclear arsenals and stockpiles. This will contribute to the creation of an international environment that is free of all forms of threats, where all human, economic and environmental resources are conducive to the full use of development plans, human interests and prosperity.

Mr. Šerkšnys (Lithuania): Allow me first of all, Sir, to congratulate you wholeheartedly upon your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. We are well aware of your expertise in the field of disarmament and arms control and of your diplomatic skills. I wish to assure you of our unconditional support in the discharge of your important task. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

I would like also to extend our heartfelt sympathies to the people of the United States and to the other States whose citizens perished in the heinous terrorist attacks of 11 September.

Lithuania has fully associated itself with the statement delivered by Belgium on behalf of the European Union. I take this opportunity to elaborate on certain issues of importance to my country.

The beginning of the twenty-first century might well be judged by future historians as the time when a united world took bold moves to redress the legal, moral and ethical incoherence of the twentieth century. Unilateralism, deterrence, strategic equilibrium or, indeed, many hitherto seemingly indispensable notions of modern statesmanship, have been shelved or dispensed with in the face of a menace that is more mature, deep-rooted, ominous and gruesome — a menace without a face that does not respect borders and aims at high-value targets. All nations have put their minds together to trim the deepest roots of spreading international terrorism. The abundance of weapons of mass destruction, missiles, conventional

military hardware and small arms has suddenly become a deadly liability within the easy reach of villains.

The events of 11 September have struck at the core values cherished by the international community: openness, freedom, tolerance and democracy. I cannot help but underscore a task laid out by the Secretary-General in defence of those values, namely, to develop a broad, comprehensive and sustained strategy to combat terrorism. While that fight will be long and multifaceted, an impact on disarmament will be obvious. As Under-Secretary-General Dhanapala put it the other day,

> "there is no going back to business as usual." (*A/C.1/56/PV.3*)

Lithuania fully concurs with the view of the Secretary-General that there is much we can do to help prevent future terrorist acts carried out with weapons of mass destruction. That is a stark recognition of the fact that the achievements in non-proliferation thus far have been mixed at best. Many of the non-proliferation and arms control regimes and instruments lack universal adherence or appear to be outdated and hardly designed to zero in on non-traditional threats posed by non-State actors.

Humankind is all the more vulnerable today for being capable of mass producing nuclear warheads, deadly bacteria, chemical agents, missiles, highly enriched uranium and radioactive materials. Technology and mass production continue to slip away from political, legal and moral control. Global military expenditures are again on the rise. Worse, the threat of annihilation engendered by the existence of nuclear weapons appears to have been firmly codified in the back of many people's minds.

It is true that we have lately been encouraged by the fact that the views of both the United States and the Russian Federation are converging on significantly lower levels of nuclear arsenals. It is true that we have been heartened by the progress in scrapping long-range missiles and launch silos under START I, and by the ratification of START II by the Russian Federation. It is also true that we have been supportive of the United States-Russian dialogue on strategic stability.

Still, the asymmetry of modern warfare, the existence of shadowy guerrillas with global reach, and the vulnerability of nuclear devices to theft or unauthorized use or simply to the chance that a madman might get his hands on them are today more than ever before eroding the logic and rationale behind the justifications for thousands of weapons designated for mutual assured destruction. What the world needs instead is mutual assured peace. I am hopeful that reductions in nuclear weapons will be verifiable and irreversible, that the role of nuclear weapons in security policies will be diminished, and that transparency will be given more than just lip service.

I also harbour the hope that the fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) will not go by unnoticed. Without universal application of the Treaty's provisions, the sustainable implementation of its main objectives may prove to be perilously elusive. We want no more tests. That is why we appeal to the 13 States whose ratifications are still outstanding to take the necessary steps to ratify.

Equally perilous is the stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament. It is a pity for the Conference to be haggling over its programme of work while turning a deaf ear to the issue of fissile materials, which continue to pile up and can spread unchecked. Yet, it is hoped that the negotiation on a fissile material cut-off treaty will get off the ground sooner rather than later. Carrying out the long overdue review of the Conference's agenda, revamping its functioning and expanding its membership may well free that body of its cold war tendencies. We do not believe that disarmament has run its course in Geneva. The events of 11 September have underscored the need for a forceful response from the Conference on Disarmament.

Nuclear weapons have so far been, and will probably remain, out of the reach of terrorists and non-State actors. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), export controls and a number of international conventions have made their crucial contribution to that end. Still, confidence in the other regimes such as the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) can hardly continue indefinitely, unless a renewed worldwide political commitment to both regimes is extended without delay.

The Chemical Weapons Convention's verification regime, which is probably the most complex regime, has made an outstanding contribution to international and regional peace and security. Three challenges must

be vigorously addressed in ensuring that chemicals are not weaponized and used in a terror attack: the universalization, strict application and funding of the CWC regime. Universal adherence will tighten the screws of the regime. Strict application and implementation of all the provisions, including those related to assistance, will solidify the confidence of all States parties. Adequate funding is also needed in order not to compromise the capacities of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to carry out its mandated activities in a robust and efficient manner.

Of greater concern is the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention — the weakest link in the system of regimes to prohibit weapons of mass destruction. Development in such areas as defence, preparedness, non-proliferation and counter-terrorism have not eliminated the *raison d'être* for a verification regime that can play a useful and cost-effective role, particularly in the light of mounting concerns about the possible use of bio-weapons in terrorism.

Arguably, few developments in the area of arms control have stirred more concern lately than the proliferation of long and medium-range missile know-how. More than ever before, we have before us the challenge of stopping the spread of the means to deliver weapons of mass destruction. The regime against the proliferation of such weapons is riddled with holes. We therefore support stepping up anti-proliferation diplomacy. The creation of the United Nations Panel of Governmental Experts on Missiles in All Their Aspects is just one welcome development. The universalization of the draft international code of conduct drawn up by the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) is another crucial endeavour, not in the least because the power of that regime must match the power and ranges of missiles.

The fight against terrorism will have an immense effect on every dimension of arms control and non-proliferation. Small arms are no exception. The 2001 Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects was an important step in mapping out the strategy to combat this proliferation. While recognizing that the problem of small arms is not amenable to a quick-fix solution, it is now important to follow through as quickly as possible with the measures agreed in the Programme of Action and to continue to build upon them as a follow-up process. Of no less importance is the elimination of glaring loopholes, such as the unregulated brokering, financing and transportation of small arms. It is equally necessary to increase transparency, bolster arms embargoes and develop an international code of conduct on arms transfers.

Lithuania, for its part, has been working closely with the European Union (EU), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization with the aim of putting in place stringent national legislation, developing export controls, strengthening border controls and improving stockpile management. We abide by the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports and will shortly start exchanging information on the import and export of small arms under the OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

While the small arms issue appeared on the international agenda only fairly recently, anti-personnel landmines have already acquired the status of a preventable disease. The Ottawa Convention is a tremendous success in the making, both as a means of eliminating stockpiles of landmines worldwide and as a powerful vehicle for demining and rehabilitation and the implementation of mine awareness programmes. Lithuania, as a signatory State, sees great value in the Convention and provides practical support for its main goals. In order to give currency to our intentions, we are considering the possibility of submitting, on a voluntary basis, our initial national report under article 7 of the Convention.

We also attach particular importance to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. The extension of the applicability of the whole Convention to non-international armed conflicts is a very pertinent and timely proposal, given the shifting nature of conflicts. We also support addressing the issue of explosive remnants of war, in the context of strengthening the Convention.

Time is of the essence. If we are to start building a more secure world based on a culture of peace, we had better make use of this window of opportunity. History will judge us by our deeds, not our words. Lithuania trusts that at this session, the First Committee will be able to muster the necessary political will and unity in the pursuit of a world that is not a danger to itself. To that end, we remain committed to strengthening arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.

Mr. Hussein (Ethiopia): On behalf of the Ethiopian delegation, I would like to extend sincere congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of this Committee. We are confident that you will be able to effectively steer the Committee's work to a successful conclusion, and we wish to assure you of our delegation's fullest cooperation. Our congratulations are also extended to the other members of the Bureau. In addition, we would like to commend the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, for his inspiring remarks, which we hope will stimulate us to tackle the challenges ahead energetically and promote the disarmament agenda of the United Nations.

The conclusion of the cold war era has by no means freed us from a fear of threats to international peace and security. Instead, the world today is moving into an era in which a new type of warfare is emerging, and the challenges which we are currently facing are multidimensional in scope. The unimaginable and inhumane terrorist acts orchestrated against a multinational civilian population on 11 September will forever be embedded in our minds. As we remember those horrendous acts, we must not let our spirits be dampened. Instead, we must endeavour to renew our energy to confront these challenges with energy so as to dismantle the various deadly sources of threats to international peace and security.

The international community has a major responsibility to reduce the vulnerability of the civilian population throughout the world to such acts of violence and terror. The potential threat of nuclear and chemical warfare is, indeed, a lingering fear, and in an effort to eradicate this fear, the international community must prioritize its work in the urgent and active pursuit of a vigorous disarmament agenda. It is, therefore, my delegation's hope that during this session the First Committee will be instrumental in achieving the Organization's goal of consolidating peace and security through international cooperation.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction continues to be a major concern. The Ethiopian Government calls upon the international community to continue moving forward in its battle to end such proliferation and to develop strategies to achieve the ultimate goal of disarmament.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the backbone of the international community's strategy in the pursuit of the total elimination of nuclear weapons leading to nuclear disarmament, and my country, Ethiopia, continues to support and encourage the States parties to the NPT to seriously address the issue of universality. This objective should be earnestly pursued in our global campaign to achieve the elimination of nuclear weapons.

The consensus reached at the NPT Review Conference in 2000 was, indeed, commendable. The agreement reached on issues such as nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, nuclear safety and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy was indicative of the further strengthening of the Treaty's review process. Unfortunately, however, the Final Document did not resolve the differences in a number of areas. There remains a wide diversity of views between the nuclear-weapon States and the non-nuclear-weapon States. Nevertheless, it is hoped that future review conferences will make further progress in attaining a nuclear-weapon-free world.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is a crucial instrument of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, especially in the context of curtailing the development of nuclear weapons. In recognition of the lack of a full complement of ratifying States to that Treaty, Ethiopia acknowledges the importance of maintaining the current moratorium on nuclear testing, pending the Treaty's entry into force. Nevertheless, we are also confident that the upcoming conference will provide the opportunity for generating renewed efforts for its entry into force.

Ethiopia expresses its deep concern over the lack of progress made by the Conference on Disarmament, which further inhibits movement on global security and disarmament. The deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament is a major setback to launching negotiations on the mandate which was approved in 1995. We therefore appeal to Member States to urgently overcome the obstacles in an effort to streamline the work of the Conference on Disarmament and facilitate its programme of work.

Another crucial aspect of the global menace to international peace and security is the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, which continues to be a primary threat to security and to endanger the lives of civilians throughout the world. The United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and

Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York from 9 to 20 July 2001, demonstrated the international community's continuing efforts and commitment to combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We commend the success of the Conference and the consensus on the formulation of an international Programme of Action, which is a significant first step towards the goal of preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

My delegation, however, also believes that it is of paramount importance for Member States and their civil societies, as well as the regional and international organizations, to consolidate their efforts and mobilize their resources towards facilitating the full implementation of the agreed Programme of Action. We also firmly believe that the role of the United Nations is pivotal in overseeing the implementation of the agreed measures, as well as establishing a mechanism for follow-up action.

Ethiopia commends the Nicaraguan Government for hosting the Third Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, which was held in Managua, Nicaragua, from 18 to 21 September. This Convention undoubtedly provided a comprehensive framework to eliminate anti-personnel landmines, provide relief to mine victims and ameliorate the conditions of mine-affected communities.

The eradication of landmines is indeed a very important disarmament activity, in our view. The use of landmines has serious social and economic consequences for the populations of mine-affected countries, as is clearly demonstrated by the prolonged pain and suffering endured by millions of innocent civilians.

Ethiopia fully recognizes the gravity of the problem of landmines and unexploded ordnance. Thus, it has identified mine action as one of its priority areas. In this regard, the Government of Ethiopia, together with the United Nations Development Programme technical assistance team, has established a Mine Action Office and a demining training centre as part of a national mine action framework.

In conclusion, let me commend the United Nations and the Secretary-General for the award of this year's Nobel Peace Prize, of which they may feel proud. This achievement is a symbolic reminder of the successes we have achieved together so far in our arduous efforts to maintain peace throughout the world. Our goal, nevertheless, remains largely unaccomplished. However, it is hoped that the Nobel Peace Prize will serve as a motivational tool so that we may continue to strive relentlessly to achieve peace amid the upsurge of new dimensions to the challenges we currently face in bringing out a peaceful world.

Mr. Kerim (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): At the outset, I should like to extend my warmest congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee at this very important juncture, and to express our confidence that under your able guidance the Committee will successfully conclude its work this year. In this matter, you can count on our delegation's full support. My congratulations go to the other members of the Bureau as well.

I would also like to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Dhanapala, for his thought-provoking comments at the beginning of our deliberations. It gives me pleasure to join all the previous speakers who have welcomed the presence of Under-Secretary-General Dhanapala and Special Envoy Petrovsky at this session.

The news of the award of the 2001 Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations and its Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, in two equal parts, news that has spread throughout the world, was more than thrilling for all of us who, in one way or another, share responsibility for the work of the Organization. Congratulating wholeheartedly the United Nations and Secretary-General Annan once more on this outstanding recognition, I emphasize how much we share the view of the Nobel Prize Committee that

> "the only negotiable route to global peace and cooperation goes by way of the United Nations."

May these words be perceived not only as acknowledgement of the work of the United Nations so far, but also as a signpost for its future endeavours, which should rely more on unorthodox remedies rather than conventional solutions.

The tragic events of 11 September point to the sober reality that disarmament and non-proliferation regimes promoted on a multilateral and general basis are more necessary than ever today, in order to prevent

terrorists and their organizations having access to more powerful means of carrying out their unspeakable acts.

We note with the deepest concern the close connections between international terrorism and the illegal movement of nuclear, chemical, biological and other deadly materials, as a paramount threat to international peace and security at the dawn of the new millennium. An urgent and effective response by the international community to this global threat is a must, and how to articulate this necessity in our deliberations in the First Committee should be, in our view, a priority.

The bitter experience of the South-Eastern European region in the past decade, including the most recent events in my country, the Republic of Macedonia, is yet more proof of close interlinkages between international terrorism and illegal arms trafficking, organized crime, drug trafficking and money-laundering.

In our view, one of the main reasons for the present unsatisfactory developments and the lag in disarmament and arms control processes is that we have not truly managed to establish and develop the agenda for those processes in conjunction with the international agenda for the maintenance of international peace and security and development as a whole. If this trend persists, if the present lack of political will and readiness to move the disarmament process forward continues and existing divisions prevail, there will realistically be less hope that disarmament and arms control can assist in meeting the goal set by the world leaders in the Millennium Declaration — to establish a just and lasting peace in the world, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter. This is not the time for business as usual in dealing with non-proliferation and disarmament; on the contrary, concerted action is needed in order to achieve meaningful progress.

We are deeply concerned that the Conference on Disarmament remains deadlocked and has not managed to achieve any substantial negotiations, in spite of the progress achieved at the 2000 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference. The newly emerging international resolve should be channelled to break the stalemate, and thus meet the growing need for new arrangements on nuclear disarmament, fissile materials and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The approach to the Conference's work is outmoded, suited to the past period of cold war and coexistence, not to the age of cooperation, integration and globalization. The Conference should therefore change its methods of work and become universal.

My delegation would like to stress the importance of universal adherence to, and full compliance with, the NPT. We are hopeful that the preparatory process to begin next year will lead to a successful Review Conference in 2005.

The Republic of Macedonia attaches greatest importance to achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and is disappointed that it is not yet in force. However, it is encouraging to see that the number of parties to the CTBT has increased. The forthcoming Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, pursuant to article XIV of the Treaty, will, in our view, be instrumental in achieving this goal. In the meantime, it is of crucial importance to maintain the moratorium on nuclear testing, pending the entry into force of the CTBT.

My delegation welcomes the intensive consultations between Russia and the United States on the possible adaptation of the global strategic framework to the new circumstances and emerging threats. We share the views expressed by many delegations that, if the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems is to be amended or replaced, it should be for the reason that the new strategic framework makes at least a comparably strong and effective contribution to maintaining global security and stability.

The recent terrorist attacks in the United States also point to the urgency of ensuring full implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and reinforcement of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), as well as achieving their universality, in order to counter effectively the new threats of misuse of those weapons for terrorist aims, a possibility that became less remote to all of us after 11 September. The first test of such resolve will be the Fifth Review Conference of the States parties to the BWC to be held in November of this year in Geneva. These international efforts, however, will only be effective if coupled with the same determination at the national level, through increased preparedness and the adjustment of national legislation to that end.

The Republic of Macedonia welcomes the Programme of Action adopted at the recent United Nations Conference on Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in July of this year, as a good starting point to build upon with effective follow-up at the global, regional and national levels. Within the United Nations framework, we are looking forward to the response of the Secretary-General and the Security Council's expression of its readiness to be closely involved. The problem of the illicit traffic in and the circulation of small arms and light weapons within the region of Southeastern Europe is of particular concern for the Republic of Macedonia, especially after the 1997 civilian unrest in Albania and the conflict in Kosovo; it poses a serious threat not only to the security and stability of my country but to the broader region as well, particularly through its severe, adverse impact on economic, social and human development. We urge the countries in the region to take effective measures to combat this problem and support programmes and projects aimed at the collection and safe destruction of surplus stocks of small arms and light weapons.

My delegation congratulates the Government of Nicaragua for the recent, successful organizing of the Third Meeting of the States Parties to the Ottawa Convention on Anti-Personnel Mines. As a State party to the Convention, we remain strongly committed to the Ottawa process. The strengthening of this process, in our view, should be measured not only by the increase in the number of signatories, i.e. greater universality, but, even more, by the enduring abandonment of the use of these callous devices by State and non-State actors. My delegation welcomes regional and international efforts in support of mine clearance, assistance to victims and mine-awareness programmes in affected countries in Southeastern Europe.

My delegation is encouraged by the growing number of States providing information to the United Nations Register on Conventional Arms on their military holdings and procurement through national production — the Republic of Macedonia, again, is one of them, thus helping lift the veil of secrecy in this field.

Let me conclude by informing you that the delegation of the Republic of Macedonia will this year, once again, together with other delegations, submit a resolution on the maintenance of international security, good-neighbourliness, stability and development in Southeastern Europe. The resolution addresses the complexity of the problems of disarmament, stability and development in this troubled region. The thrust of this resolution is to introduce a culture of good-neighbourliness and integration — which has proven to be very much alive, notwithstanding the recent events in my country. The intention is to have the First Committee adopt the resolution by consensus, and, in that spirit, we welcome suggestions to improve the text.

Mr. Issacharoff (Israel): Allow me to congratulate you on the assumption of the demanding but distinguished task of guiding the work of the Committee. Bearing in mind the considerable work ahead of us, I am certain that you will be equal to all the challenges at hand. Please be assured of my delegation's fullest cooperation in this important international endeavour. I would also like to acknowledge the presence of the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, who contributes to our joint work in such an essential way.

On a more sombre note, I would like at the outset to take this opportunity to express to the United States delegation our profound condolences for the thousands of Americans so callously killed by the unprecedented and outrageous terrorist attacks on 11 September. The people of New York and Washington D.C., who bore the brunt of this incredible barbarism with such dignity and heroism, have shown the world that terror can never overcome the human spirit.

Those responsible for this cowardly act sought to decimate and destroy. The American people, fortified by values that all democratic nations cherish, will overcome and defeat this affront to humanity. As they meet this challenge, our solidarity with the people of America has no limit or qualification. Indeed, we view the measures taken by the United States over the last few days as being fully consonant with the right of self-defence enshrined in the United Nations Charter and in international law.

As we hold our deliberations under the shadow of these horrendous acts, it is clear that the substance of our work is affected by the deeper implications of what has transpired. These events have changed the parameters of our thinking as we try to gauge the current strategic challenge to international peace and security that terror presents.

Terrorism has become a global threat. It is a strategic weapon that not only attacks the fabric of freedom and democracy but also undermines our basic assumptions regarding the use of military force and the nature of enemies. If the classic philosophers of war described war as politics by other means and as a dialectical process that defines the relations between enemies, the dynamics of terror require an entirely new thought process.

It is a war in which the enemy lives in shadows, even within our own societies. The conflict is, in his eyes, absolute, and there is no room for any manner of compromise. Terror does not take issue with people's politics; it assails their very existence. It does so, not by military arms in the field of battle, but rather by targeting defenceless civilians as a tool of intimidation and chaos. It transforms a civilian airliner into a manned missile of death. It does not seek to create an alternative credible reality, but rather, a reflection of its own fanaticism.

There are no more any imaginary scenarios, and the international community must now address a profound and unequivocal challenge to global stability, with all its ramifications around the world. If we do not adjust our thinking, our conventional wisdom may become immaterial. We must prepare for every eventuality, for there are none that we can now afford to ignore.

For some countries like my own, this new global reality adds another complex dimension to a regional stability that has always been fragile at best. We are already confronting an intense combination of threats across the spectrum of our national security, from terror, to increasingly sophisticated conventional arms, to the growing threat of weapons of mass-destruction and ballistic missiles. These threats oblige extensive preparation to prevent the exposure and vulnerability of our citizens to imminent and potential dangers.

Suicide bombers, cross-border terrorist and rocket attacks and potential missile bombardments of the type we endured in the Gulf War are all directed at our civilian population. The appropriate countermeasures and preparations can be active or passive and entail a considerable demand on our quality of life and national resources, bearing in mind the nature of the enemy, the type of conflict he espouses and the capabilities he still seeks. We shall continue to take the necessary steps to ensure our security.

States, however, should also contend, where possible, with threats through diplomatic and normative action. Numerous international conventions, regional agreements, bilateral treaties and even unilateral policies should seek to enhance security between States and to reduce tensions.

In the realm of diplomacy, Israel continues to view the regional context as a primary and essential framework to forward critical arms control measures predicated on a comprehensive and durable peace in the area of the Middle East. Indeed, after the Madrid Conference in 1991, a working group for arms control and regional security was established and quickly became an important regional forum for addressing security issues. Unfortunately, these activities were discontinued by 1995 by other countries in the region.

In recent years, Israel has sought to lay the enduring foundations of peace in our region based on an historic reconciliation embodying the notions of compromise, mutual trust and respect, open borders and good-neighbourliness. The basis for coexistence between Israel and its neighbours was laid in the bilateral peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan and we still hope to widen this process to encompass the Palestinians, Lebanon and Syria.

Relations of peace will put an end to arms races in our region and lead to reductions, to the minimal levels required for national self-defence, of standing military forces, defence expenditures and conventional arms. Effective arms control measures can only be achieved and sustained in a region where wars, armed conflicts, terror, political hostility, incitement and non-recognition are not features of everyday life.

Accordingly, the political reality in our region mandates a practical step-by-step approach, culminating in a comprehensive peace and the eventual establishment of a mutually verifiable zone free of ballistic missiles and of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons. This zone should emanate from and encompass all the States of the region by virtue of free and direct negotiations between them. It is in this spirit that Israel has been part of the consensus in the First Committee for over 20 years on the resolution regarding the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. We hope that this consensus will be preserved once again this year. In any event, I would like to emphasize that Israel has not weakened

in its overall resolve to realize this vision of peace and stability through diplomatic means.

Notwithstanding the lack of progress at the regional level, Israel attempted during the past decade to become more involved in the normative framework of international arms control efforts. It was in this spirit that Israel signed the Chemical Weapons Convention in 1993 and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in 1996 and ratified the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons in 1995.

Israel has adhered to the provisions of the Missile Technology Control Regime, respected the other supplier regimes and participated in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. Over the past year, Israel was an active participant in the international effort in the United Nations and in other international forums to reduce the proliferation of ballistic missiles and their related technology. We also attach importance to the recent United Nations deliberations on the illicit trafficking of small arms and hope that the implementation of the Programme of Action will contribute to the global fight against terror.

Israel has taken these steps in parallel with its efforts to advance the peace process with its Arab neighbours. This has also been at a time when existential threats to Israel in the Middle East are emerging from other countries seeking to develop long-range ballistic missiles and capabilities in other weapons of mass destruction, in conjunction with their extreme political hostility and antagonism to my country. We cannot forget that the use of chemical weapons by countries in the Middle East against civilian populations is a matter of historical record.

In that context, we would point out that Iraq has yet to comply with all the relevant resolutions of the Security Council. Indeed, the prevention of Iraq's reconstituting its weapons of mass destruction and missile capabilities will remain a critical strategic factor in the quest for any regional stability in the Middle East.

In addition, Iran has done nothing to conceal its unconditional hostility towards my country's existence or the fact that it is procuring ballistic missiles capable of reaching Israel and beyond. I would recall that, in this Committee last year, I stated that Israel has no dispute with the Iranian people and seeks no conflict with the Iranian Government. Iran, for its part, has continued to develop its weapons of mass destruction and missile programmes, to assist and encourage the terrorist group Hezbollah's attempts to destabilize our border with Lebanon and actively to oppose any attempt to further peace between Israel and its neighbours.

Today, we are facing, as are many other States within the region and beyond, a more comprehensive and almost overwhelming security challenge than we have known to date. This occurs at a time when it is clear that there are insufficient regional mechanisms to contend with and reduce the overall array of threats, either in their physical or political sense.

In this context, one of the resolutions of the First Committee that serve no useful or constructive purpose is submitted under the agenda item entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East". This resolution seeks to single out Israel on a matter that is central to its national security, totally ignoring the immense security problems and the inherent instability of the Middle East. It also chooses to ignore the profound hostility to Israel of certain countries that continue to reject any form of peaceful reconciliation and coexistence. If anyone supports this resolution believing that it in any way alleviates the acute and pressing security needs of the region, they are doing themselves and the peoples of the region a grave disservice.

An alternative and far better approach would be to consider ideas and initiatives that actually improve the situation on the ground. We hope that our neighbours will become partners to rebuilding a regional mechanism for consultation on arms control and regional security matters and also view the adoption of confidence-building measures in a more positive light. Confidence-building measures are not a prize for one side, but rather an essential means of reducing tensions and misunderstandings, particularly in times of crisis. They most definitely have a role to play today.

While we by no means have all the answers and solutions, we believe that the international community must do more to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles, particularly to those States that seek these capabilities and actively sponsor and support terrorist groups. We must spare no effort to exclude this proliferation and the terrorist use of such weapons. We are at a juncture where the proponents of proliferation, terror and weapons of mass

destruction could seek to combine their resources in a fusion between mass destruction and fanaticism. We must prevent them from achieving this ultimate evil.

Terrorism at any level can never be tolerated in any political process or as part of diplomacy. The fight against terror is indivisible. Those who seek to justify terror in one form or another will have the effect of perpetuating it. Any such justification will also undermine the unity of action needed to defeat this affliction of the modern age. The terrorist has chosen this absolute war and it is the terrorist who must accept the absolute response.

Furthermore, as countries that may tend to disagree on a range of diverse issues, we must for once join together in acknowledging that this new array of threats endangers the entire fabric of global stability and all countries that pursue moderation, coexistence and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. We regard Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) as an important first step in this regard. We cannot ignore the potential of these threats to change the nature of societies. We have already seen their intense impact on critical aspects of international life over the last weeks.

Recently I have thought much of how Raymond Aron described the human condition in the first two world wars. He observed that

> "Man, without being in uniform, was defending his soul. The victory of either side signified, or seemed to signify, a conversion of souls by force".

Those words recall the darkest hours of the last century and are a testament of what is at stake today. In this battle between souls, there can be no neutral ground.

Mr. Aldouri (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): It gives me pleasure, Sir, to congratulate you on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. We are entirely confident that, under your wise leadership, our deliberations will be crowned with success. My congratulations go also to the other members of the Bureau.

The United Nations agenda accords high priority to the goal of complete disarmament. Since the first session of the General Assembly, the United Nations has worked towards complete nuclear disarmament. But a review of what has been achieved to date in the field of disarmament shows that this falls far short of mankind's aspirations — especially today when, more than ever before, mankind is threatened by nuclear holocaust. Such threats to international peace and security have increased since the end of the cold war.

In addition to the continuing, escalating international and regional arms race, we see aggression, foreign occupation, interference in the internal affairs of States and the perpetual unilateral use of force. We also see policies of hegemony, violations of the Charter and of international law, and the imposition of inhumane sanctions. These are now central and prominent features of a unipolar order controlled by an arrogant Power whose sole aim is to control the world so that it can impose hegemony and its own ideas and concepts.

What Iraq has been subjected to for more than a decade exemplifies the disastrous consequences of the prevalence of brute force in international relations. For example, the United States of America and the United Kingdom imposed a no-fly zone in northern Iraq in 1991 and on southern Iraq in 1992, expanding the latter in 1996. The purpose was to attain objectives that have absolutely nothing to do with Security Council resolutions. Indeed, the imposition of the zones violated the Charter of the United Nations and international law, as the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, said on 27 June 2001:

> "You know my position on this, and I have indicated that when you analyse and read the Security Council resolutions I do not see the Security Council resolutions as a basis for [the imposition of no-fly zones]". (*Press release SG/SM/7865, 27 June 2001*)

His predecessor, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, said that the United States claim that Security Council resolution 688 (1991) gives the right to establish no-fly zones was baseless. Moreover, since the official ceasefire established in accordance with Security Council resolution 687 (1991), the United States has committed five broad aggressions against my country. The first was in January 1993, and others followed in June 1993, September 1996, December 1998 and February 2001. There was no Security Council authorization for these. That is in addition to the continued daily aggressive actions by the United Kingdom and the United States, which have been condemned by the international community, including other members of the Security Council.

To this we must add the funding, support and training of terrorist groups whose purpose is to destabilize Iraq, threaten its territorial integrity, and undermine its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, as well as the premeditated destruction of the lives of Iraqi citizens, infrastructure and civil institutions. The United States position was reflected in the stance taken by that country at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. That country rejected references in the Programme of Action to limiting the trade in small arms and light weapons to States. That position opens the door to the transfer of such weapons to non-State actors such as secessionist movements, rebel movements, terrorists and criminals all over the world. At a time when everybody is talking about combating terrorism, that State harbours, funds and trains terrorists, and enacts national legislation calling for a change in the political system of another country, allocating some $97 million for that purpose. Is that position in conformity with international law? What is terrorism? Is that not terrorism?

The United States of America and the United Kingdom used depleted uranium shells extensively against Iraq in 1991, and used them again against Yugoslavia in 1999.

The depleted uranium represents a generation of radiological weapons that destroy life and the environment for future generations where it is used. It also has toxic and chemical effects, according to reports of the World Health Organization (WHO). The use of depleted uranium shells against Iraq has led to a great increase in cancer cases, miscarriages and birth deformities, particularly in Iraq's southern provinces, where this weapon was used. It has led to a disaster in health and in the Iraqi environment, and its impact will continue far into the future. It also led to the death of more than 50,000 children in the first year, 1991, and it hit thousands of British and American soldiers with what is now called "the Gulf War syndrome".

The United States and Great Britain used over 300 tons of depleted uranium munitions in their aggression against Iraq in 1991. They also used more than 10 tons of the same material in Kosovo in 1999. This terrible weapon hit North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) soldiers who were participating in the military operations there and suffered various kinds of diseases as a result of exposure to depleted uranium radiation.

According to scientific reports, these shells will pollute the areas in which they were used, the land on which human beings, flora and fauna live, for about five million years and will lead to the death of thousands of people directly or indirectly exposed to their dangerous radiation.

In view of the danger caused by this weapon and its negative effects on the environment and on human beings, my delegation believes that it is high time for the First Committee to study this question very seriously, and the international community should start negotiations immediately in the Conference on Disarmament in order to develop an international treaty to ban the development, production, stockpiling and use of munitions of depleted uranium and radiological weapons and to destroy whatever stocks exist of these weapons.

Unlike what the previous speaker said, Iraq has implemented its commitments under section C of Security Council resolution 687 (1991). Most countries, including three permanent members of the Security Council, have acknowledged that Iraq has actually implemented paragraphs 8 to 13 of resolution 687 (1991) relating to disarmament. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has also acknowledged this fact, as have many of the former inspectors of the defunct Special Commission, including the famous Scott Ritter, who wrote in the June 2000 issue of *Arms Control Today* magazine that Iraq has been disarmed since the beginning of 1998 in a manner never before seen in history. Thus, and in accordance with the same resolution, what is required now is that the Security Council carry out its commitments and implement paragraphs 14, 21 and 22 of the same resolution.

In view of what I have just said, Iraq will not accept anything less than the total lifting of the unjust blockade imposed upon it and the implementation of paragraph 14 of resolution 687 (1991), which refers to the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free from weapons of mass destruction. Any proposal or tendency that does not include the implementation of paragraph 14 of the resolution and that does not bind and commit the Zionist entity and other countries will not be accepted by Iraq, because this is an essential question for Iraq and for the Arab nation. Iraq will never accept a re-writing of Security Council resolutions and will reject any resolution that does not restore its full legitimate rights.

Our Arab region suffers from a great imbalance in armaments. The Zionist entity that occupies Palestine possesses all weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons and their means of delivery. The same entity is developing these weapons with direct support from and the cooperation of the United States of America and other countries in violation of the commitments they made under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). This racist entity is number six on the list of those who possess nuclear weapons. Its possession of weapons of mass destruction is coupled with its expansionist policy at the expense of Arab land in Lebanon and Syria and its continued aggression against the Palestinian people, thereby subjecting the whole area to great danger.

Security and stability in the Middle East requires the removal of the weapons of mass destruction that are possessed by the Zionist entity and requires that its nuclear facilities be subjected to the IAEA safeguards regime in application of paragraph 14 of Security Council resolutions 687 (1991) and 487 (1981). The continuation of the Zionist entity's nuclear programme outside the international system of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the refusal by this entity to accede to the NPT and subject its nuclear facilities to the IAEA safeguards regime constitute a threat to the national security of the Arab nations and jeopardizes the security and stability of the area. It will limit the credibility and universality of the NPT, because this entity is the only one in the region that has not acceded to the Treaty.

Thus, the Security Council, as the organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, should guarantee the universality of all the provisions related to non-proliferation without any double standards and should take the measures required to achieve this goal, in accordance with the provisions of Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, as well as the provision of effective and comprehensive guarantees to the non-nuclear States that there will be no use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against them. Iraq proceeds from the fact that it has been a victim of the use of weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons and depleted uranium.

At a time when the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament reflects the international community's need for a more stable, peaceful and secure world, a sort of paralysis has afflicted the Conference since 1997. That paralysis is the result of a lack of political will on the part of some parties, and it has prevented the Conference from carrying out substantive work, despite the fact that Mr. Amorim submitted a proposal on 21 August 2001 aimed at breaking that deadlock. The delegation of Iraq supports the essential elements of the Amorim proposal on establishing ad hoc committees. We hope that negotiations in the Conference will take into account the international need to establish agreements and instruments on nuclear disarmament. My delegation also hopes that the Conference will be able to begin its substantive work at the next session. We, like several other delegations represented in the Conference on Disarmament, also welcome and support expanding the membership of the Conference.

At a time when the international community is making great efforts to regulate and coordinate activities aimed at using outer space for peaceful purposes and the benefit of all humankind, the American Administration has been trying since 1998 to develop a national missile defence system outside the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, which was signed between the United States and the Soviet Union in 1972. That Treaty defined the defensive systems of the two countries and set out a course for reductions in tactical and strategic nuclear weapons so as to guarantee international peace and security.

The American effort to militarize space contradicts its commitments under international and bilateral agreements, including the ABM Treaty and the principles regulating the activities of States in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes. The American Administration's continuation of work towards that goal will start a new global arms race that will undermine the strategic balance, peace and stability. We wish to take this opportunity to say that we support the Russian Federation's draft resolution on keeping the ABM Treaty in force, as we believe that its implementation by the signatories would serve to curb the arms race and contribute to international peace and security.

While referring to the need to rid humanity of weapons of mass destruction, we would also like to remind the Committee that the number of Iraqi civilians killed by the unjust sanctions that have been imposed on Iraq for over 11 years exceeds the world's total number of victims of weapons of mass destruction. It is not surprising that the country that first used nuclear weapons, against Nagasaki and

Hiroshima, is also the same State using sanctions as a weapon of genocide against Iraq. In this connection, I wish to refer to the report issued by the subcommittee on human rights at its most recent session, held in July and August. The report stated that the sanctions against Iraq were illegal under international humanitarian and human rights law. Reports by other humanitarian and legal organizations have also confirmed that the sanctions against Iraq constitute by all measures a crime of genocide.

The continued existence of nuclear weapons and the use of comprehensive economic sanctions as a political means of carrying out genocide against a people is a threat to humanity. Their use will lead to terrible consequences for humankind and should be halted immediately. We should place the interests of humankind as a whole above the narrow interests of one party or another. We should also continue to work to fully eradicate all weapons of mass destruction, nuclear weapons in particular. We should prevent international mechanisms from being used as cover for the implementation of genocidal policies against peoples.

Mr. Kittikhoun (Lao People's Democratic Republic): Allow me first, on behalf of the delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. We are confident that, with your rich experience and diplomatic skills, you will guide the work of the Committee to a successful conclusion. At the same time, may I also take this opportunity to express our appreciation to Ambassador U Mya Than of Myanmar for the excellent work he carried out as Chairman of the Committee during the previous session.

I fully associate myself with the statement made by the Ambassador of Myanmar, who spoke on behalf of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN). On behalf of my own country, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, I would like to emphasize some points that are of importance to us.

The situation in the world has not been developing smoothly. Acts of aggression, violence, religious conflict, civil strife and interference in the internal affairs of States continue to pose threats to world peace and security. However, with the tragic events of 11 September and their aftermath, the situation has become even more difficult. The threat of the use of biological, chemical and other weapons of mass destruction is now a reality. The international community should work together and do everything possible to seek collective security that can bring durable peace and security to all. Those efforts should avoid seeking security for oneself alone while leaving others under threats and fear.

In a message to the forty-fifth General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Secretary-General Kofi Annan said,

> "Making progress in the areas of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament is more important than ever in the aftermath of last week's appalling terrorist attack on the United States." (*SG/SM/7958*)

That message from the Secretary-General reminds us all of the grave danger that nuclear weapons pose to humankind.

In that regard, we would like to stress the importance of the successful conclusion of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The States parties to the Treaty agreed that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We hope that the commitments already made by State parties, in particular those made by the nuclear-weapon States, will be fulfilled. Every effort should be made to find additional ways to make progress towards the elimination of all nuclear weapons.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic supports and welcomes every effort of the international community, including bilateral and unilateral efforts, to reduce or eliminate nuclear weapons. In this context, we hope that the upcoming summit between the Russian Federation and the United States of America will lead to the entry into force of the Treaty on Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START II). We look forward to its implementation.

Last year, our country, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, deposited with the United Nations its instrument of ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). This is manifest testimony of the Lao people's aspiration to see our world free from nuclear weapons. Although imperfect, the CTBT is, in our opinion, an important instrument that can help international efforts towards

achieving the ultimate goal of nuclear disarmament. In this vein, we would like to stress the importance of achieving universal adherence to the CTBT. To that end, we urge all States, and in particular the nuclear-weapon States that have not yet ratified the Treaty, to ratify it as soon as possible. Nuclear disarmament is a long process. All efforts towards achieving this objective should be welcomed. This is how we believe the CTBT ought to be perceived.

Like many others, the Lao People's Dèmocratic Republic strongly believes that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the regions concerned has contributed to global and regional peace and security and the efforts towards gradual elimination of all nuclear weapons. In that regard, we support fully the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones such as those established under the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba.

Many countries are of the view that the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty is a cornerstone of strategic stability. For those countries, it has served to maintain world security and strategic balance for over two decades, and is a basis for further reductions in strategic offensive weapons. We share this view and express the hope that the States parties to the Treaty will comply fully with its provisions.

It is regrettable that the negotiations last May on a verification protocol to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention reached no agreement. In view of the importance of the Convention, it is crucial that the Fifth Review Conference of the Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention, which is to be held in November, achieve positive results. In dealing with this issue, we would like to reiterate our opinion that the use of biological knowledge for economic development and peaceful purposes should be taken into consideration.

For four years now, the Conference on Disarmament, the only multilateral negotiating body it the field of disarmament, has failed to agree on a programme of work. As a consequence, this has slowed the work on disarmament. In that regard, we call upon all States concerned to redouble their efforts and engage in negotiations that take into account both nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

The United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held last July, marked a good beginning in the worldwide efforts to identify ways and means to tackle the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. The Programme of Action adopted by the Conference contains some practical measures to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in such weapons. However, like many others, we regret that the Programme of Action still lacks some important elements. In that regard, we hope that the follow-up measures will improve upon the achievements of the Conference and that the Programme of Action will be implemented effectively.

In the new global environment of globalization and communications, confidence-building measures are vitally important for the promotion of peace and security in the various regions of the world, and for the enhancement of mutual understanding among nations. In that context, we very much appreciate all the activities organized by the United Nations, regional centres, Governments, organizations and non-governmental organizations on promoting and enhancing mutual understanding and cooperation among countries and peoples in various regions. We believe that only cooperation and confidence-building measures will help bring real peace and security to all nations.

In conclusion, as we all know full well, nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction are the only weapons that threaten the survival of humankind. These weapons can destroy every single living creature on our planet in a matter of minutes. It is therefore essential for the world community to make unremitting efforts to ensure that the world is free of these weapons.

Together with all other delegations, the Lao People's Democratic Republic will continue to do its utmost in the efforts to attain this noble goal.

Mr. Fils-Aimé (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of my delegation, permit me first to extend my warmest congratulations, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. You have already conducted our work for more than a week, and we are very happy that we chose you to lead our deliberations. Our congratulations also go to all members of the Bureau, who are assisting you in this

important and delicate task, as well as to your predecessor, Ambassador Mya Than of Myanmar.

For a moment, on 11 September 2001, the world was under the impression that it was watching *Towering Inferno II*, with Steve McQueen and Paul Newman, on their television screens. Nobody could believe their eyes, because there is no instrument powerful and sophisticated enough to convey the heated passions of certain macabre persons who call themselves "men of faith". The world had never before witnessed what the hatred harboured in the hearts of fanatics could spawn. The world had never imagined that such deadly hatred could lead these terrorists down to the pits of hell to conceive such awfully heinous, beastly, monstrous and demonic acts. Our delegation resolutely condemns these acts of terror and takes this opportunity to reiterate our deepest sympathy to the American Government and people, particularly to the thousands of bereaved families.

This time the perpetrators used civilian aircraft as missiles and high-occupancy buildings as targets. What would happen if they could lay their hands on the kind of weapons that a number of delegations, for one or reason or another, insist on seeing as instruments of deterrence? At this time, we are fully convinced that these weapons — nuclear, chemical and biological — are not really instruments of deterrence, but rather instruments of pressure and blackmail used to confer strategic advantages. In the light of the 11 September experience, it is absolutely imperative that we regain our sense of urgency. The crisis facing multilateral diplomacy in the field of disarmament has lasted too long. What good is it to hold more and more international conferences if the commitments made there are not respected?

In his resounding statement of 8 October 2001 before this Committee, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, to whom my delegation pays a well-deserved tribute for his commitment to the cause of disarmament, painted a fairly graphic picture of the challenges we are facing at this crucial juncture when all peoples of the world stand united in repudiating terrorism. As Mr. Dhanapala stressed, we need to take advantage of this remarkable solidarity in order to work together. This is the time to cooperate, he underlined, the time for the primacy of law, the time to recognize common threats and to realize to what extent our common security needs to be based on the pillars of justice, basic human rights and equitable development for all societies. As far as this Committee is concerned, Mr. Dhanapala said, it is time, in particular, to strengthen roads and bridges leading to the implementation of multilateral commitments to disarmament.

My delegation fully subscribes to Jamaica's statement of 12 October made on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), of which my country is a member. We will therefore not cover point by point the observations and proposals relative to the region. Nevertheless, allow my delegation to express its regret over the lack of progress in the field of disarmament, where the conclusion of legally binding, irrevocable and verifiable agreements remains seriously impeded.

First of all, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has still not come into force. Forty-four countries have not yet ratified it; 13 of these 44 ratifications are indispensable for its entry into force. Apart from that, despite the historic commitment made by the nuclear Powers at the sixth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to carry out the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, only scant initiatives have been taken to give effect to the 13 steps adopted in May 2000, particularly with regard to the part of the Final Document relating to article VI. Furthermore, it is very disappointing to state that, despite the wishes of the international community, four States, of which three are nuclear Powers, have not yet acceded to the NPT.

Being deeply committed to the disarmament cause, Haiti has never understood the logic of the nuclear deterrence doctrine. Given the nefarious results of the disasters on 6 and 9 August 1945 that pulverized Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we have never understood the basis of the promise made by certain States not to be the first to use nuclear weapons. We have never understood why these instruments capable of destroying our planet several times over are still part of our arsenals while we claim to adhere to universal values. These weapons should not have been invented in the first place, and now that the yoke of the cold war has been lifted, we need to work towards the complete elimination of these weapons, whether they are in safe places or within reach of feverish hands.

For the third year running, the Conference on Disarmament, the only multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament and arms control, is still at an impasse and has not been able to agree on a plan of work. This state of affairs does nothing to advance negotiations, and the treaty banning the production of fissile materials for military uses suffers greatly as a result.

We still live in a world where might makes right. Sooner or later, a unilateral approach on the part of one State will lead to resentment on the part of others. At the dawn of a new millennium, it would be better to forge an international coalition — a multilateral partnership — and to renounce power politics and the abuse of authority. We must accord more importance to dialogue, and create a just system that does not allow for double standards.

In this context, it would be wise of us to involve ourselves in issues relating to the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty. My delegation still believes that that Treaty must remain a guarantee of strategic stability, and we would like to express our support, as we have done in the past, for the draft resolution on safeguarding and strengthening the ABM Treaty. We hope that START II will soon enter into force and that its provisions will be implemented in their entirety, and that START III will be concluded as soon as possible.

It is regrettable that after seven years of negotiation, the Ad Hoc Group of the States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention has failed to elaborate a verification protocol. We hope that, at the Fifth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention, which will take place in Geneva at the end of the year, the mandate of the Group will be renewed so that it can proceed to the elaboration of an international legal instrument.

My delegation cannot fail to stress the importance of creating nuclear-weapon-free zones. They are an efficient means of strengthening the non-proliferation regime for such weapons. My country welcomes the fact that the 1967 Treaty of Tlatelolco created a nuclear-weapon-free zone in our region, and we cannot but encourage the creation of such zones elsewhere. The more volatile a region is, the more the elimination of the threat posed by those weapons can contribute to fostering a climate of mutual peace and trust.

My delegation welcomes the progress achieved since the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Although we are heartened by the fact that 165 States have signed the Convention since its adoption in 1993, we still need to step up our efforts to ensure the universality of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction.

My delegation welcomed the holding in New York, from 30 July to 3 August 2001, of the first session of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Missiles in All Their Aspects. We also welcome the Programme of Action adopted at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which took place in New York from 9 to 20 July this year. Although the Conference did not seek to allocate additional resources for the implementation of the Programme of Action, and although it did not provide for the total elimination of the transfer of such weapons to non-State actors — a fact regretted by a number of delegations — it nonetheless represents a very important point of departure for international cooperation to control that scourge, which, during the course of the past decade, has resulted in the death of 2 million people and left 5 million disabled, 12 million homeless and more than 1 million orphans. We hope that the Programme of Action will bear fruit as soon as possible and that every resource will be mobilized so that the excessive accumulation and spread of small arms, which have great destructive power, no longer undermine the foundations of our young economies and democracies.

The total value of arms transfers between 1993 and 2000 was about $303 billion; 70 per cent of those arms were imported by developing countries. In this context, and given the decline in official development assistance, the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, speaking on the subject of the link between disarmament and development on 11 June at the opening of a workshop in Lima, noted that developing countries needed to rely more on their own resources and, to that end, to re-examine the percentage of their gross domestic product and national budgets used for military spending.

In our country, Haiti, where international assistance is scarce, President Jean Bertrand Aristide, upon his return from exile, got rid of the national army — a body of only 7,000 men that nonetheless accounted for 40 per cent of the national budget. Despite the fact that it absorbed such a large share of

the budget, it did almost nothing to protect property or life, and it did not project a positive image of our country. To make matters worse, some of those military personnel, especially those in the highest ranks, were no more than spies bought for a handful of dollars, or torturers, notorious criminals and perennial plotters of bloody coups who were too impatient or bloodthirsty to respect the mandate of a head of State.

In the wake of the tragedy of 11 September, which has brought together people of goodwill from all cultures, my delegation would like to express the hope that there will be a revival of interest on the part of Member States in matters of disarmament. We should use this opportunity to foster a new spirit of cooperation, and redouble our efforts so as to ensure international peace and security. The Organization has come a long way: today we are sharing the Nobel Peace Prize with the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, to whom my delegation would like to pay a warm tribute. May the United Nations continue to be the source of peace, and may politicians and diplomats from Member States understand that true peace cannot be reduced simply to military concepts, but must be constructed in a climate of mutual trust.

The Chairman (*spoke in French*): I give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, who wishes to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Baeidi Nejad (Islamic Republic of Iran): Today, in this room, the Israeli representative made false and totally hostile accusations against my country. Such a statement, of course, was only to be expected, since Israel, which suffers from a lack of legitimacy, is now feeling isolated and is rightly being placed under pressure. It is therefore trying to shift the blame for its difficulties to sources other than its own extremist and aggressive policies.

Since its inception, Israel has pursued a policy of terror and intimidation in the region and, on the basis of such a policy, has developed weapons of mass destruction on a large scale. Accordingly, it has developed short-, medium- and long-range missiles to enable it to carry weapons of mass destruction across the whole of the region of the Middle East and beyond.

Today, Israel is continuing to develop nuclear weapons, against the will of the international community as reflected in consensus General Assembly resolutions and as expressed during the recent 2000 Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which asked Israel to renounce nuclear weapons and place its nuclear facilities under International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards.

In the same spirit, Israel has developed chemical and biological weapons and has, accordingly, declined to adhere to the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention. In complete contrast, my country has adopted a fundamental defence policy based on renouncing weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. My country is among the very few examples of countries in the Middle East that was an original party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention since the inception of these international treaties, although it could justifiably have not done so. My country believes that the essential benchmark for increasing and promoting security in the region is the adherence of all States to all treaties on weapons of mass destruction and thus banning the development and the production of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems.

Furthermore, in the recent regional context, we believe that every effort needs to be made to stop Israel from continuing its criminal policy in the region consisting of the massacre of innocent people in the occupied territories and the targeting of innocent people who fight only for their freedom and for an end to the occupation of their territory by Israel. On this issue, I am sure that an appropriate agenda item is and will be under consideration by other General Assembly Committees.

Programme of work

The Chairman: In accordance with the First Committee programme of work and timetable that we adopted, we will, as members know, be embarking on the second phase of our work on Monday, 22 October. We have one more day to devote to this agenda item — tomorrow, when it is expected that there will be 13 speakers. On Monday, we will start the second phase, which is a thematic discussion on item subjects, as well as the introduction and the consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security agenda items.

In order to efficiently utilize the conference facilities available to this Committee, I have prepared an indicative timetable for that second phase of the work that is contained in document A/C.1/56/CRP.2, and I guess members have it before them.

In proposing this indicative timetable, the Chair followed the practice already established by the First Committee during previous sessions of the General Assembly. So I intend to carry out the discussions in the following manner, and members will be able to follow this in document A/C.1/56/CRP.2. The meeting on Monday, 22 October, and Tuesday, 23 October, will be dedicated to questions related to nuclear weapons. Then on Wednesday, 24 October, it will be dedicated to other weapons of mass destruction and outer space — the disarmament aspects of outer space. On Thursday, 25 October, we will be dealing with questions concerning conventional weapons, and on Friday, 26 October, we will discuss regional disarmament and security and confidence-building measures, including transparency in armaments. On Monday, 29 October, and Tuesday, 30 October, we will be discussing issues related to disarmament machinery, other disarmament measures, international security and related matters of disarmament and international security.

If we complete the discussion of issues planned for a given meeting, we will then move on during that very meeting to the discussion of the next item on our timetable. Therefore, I kindly ask delegations to be prepared to do so. It is also understood that generally speaking, a degree of flexibility will be maintained to allow delegations to address issues of concern to them without, hopefully, substantially altering the structure before members. I will ask for members' understanding and cooperation in this matter. This is, I guess, important to allow the Committee to move ahead with the required efficiency and speed. The indicative timetable outlined is in accordance with the adopted decisions on the rationalization of the work of the Committee. As I mentioned earlier, in this second phase the Committee's work will combine the discussion of specific subjects, as well as the introduction and the consideration of all draft resolutions.

I would like to ask delegations to kindly introduce draft resolutions during this phase, the second phase of the Committee, as early as possible, in order, quite obviously, to enable other delegations to make comments on them. Representatives see this indicative timetable before them, and if I hear no objection, I will take it that this timetable for our thematic discussion is acceptable to delegations, and we will proceed accordingly.

In order to organize the forthcoming meetings, I would also suggest that delegations should inscribe their names on the list of speakers for the specific meetings of phase two, if possible, with the clear understanding that members all obviously have the all the latitude to raise their hands and speak from the floor.

Again, I would like to remind Member States that the deadline for the submission of the draft resolutions on all disarmament and international security agenda items is Thursday, 18 October, at 6 p.m., as was already announced earlier. All this should not come as a shock.

The next meeting of the Committee, and the last meeting of this phase one, will be held on Wednesday, 17 October, at 10 a.m., in this room.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.